DIXIE

By HANS NATHAN

DIXIE, written almost nine decades ago, is still one of the best known and best loved national songs in America. It shows native qualities that *The Star-Spangled Banner* and *Yankee Doodle* have acquired only by long usage. Since the song has produced many partisan interpretations, it is time to clarify its history.

When Daniel Decatur Emmett, a well known blackface minstrel of his time and an imaginative composer and writer for the minstrel stage, joined Bryant's Minstrels in New York City in the fall of 1858, he was entering a prolific period of his career. He was engaged, in the main, to compose music for the company—to be exact, the concluding song and dance of their shows. In addition he acted as a blackface comedian and musician. The Bryants enjoyed an excellent reputation for their inspired comicality and their timely parodies. Emmett quickly adapted himself to their style of performance. His very first song, performed at the end of November 1858, was entitled *The Land of Freedom* or *I Ain't Got Time To Tarry*. Catering to public sentiment, which was deeply involved in the question of Southern slavery, Emmett chose as the protagonist of his song a Negro who longs for his Southern home. Home to the Negro is not only his girl Dinah, for in the refrain he and the chorus emphasize "Yes, I am gwine home. Den I ain't got time to tarry, I ain't got time to dwell, I'm bound to de land of freedom, oh, niggars! fare you well."[1] The Negro character pining for the Southern plantation was well known in minstrel music since the early fifties, but in Emmett's song the political implications were considerably more outspoken than before. In Emmett's second and third songs written for the Bryants, parody of Negro characteristics becomes more and more tinged with political overtones. In *Wide Awake* or *Dar's A Darkey In De Tent,* performed in early February 1859, the Negro is described as a worthless, troublesome item which the white man

[1] The quotation is taken from an early text version of the song, which appeared in the songster *Bryant's Power of Music,* New York, 1859.

could dispose of at his leisure. As an example of how annoyance was cloaked in humor, I quote the beginning of the song:

Dar's a niggar in de tent, keep 'im in, keep 'im in, keep 'im in.
Dar's a niggar in de tent, kick 'im out, kick 'im out, kick 'im out.
Dar's a niggar in de tent, keep 'im in, keep 'im in, keep 'im in.
But he hasn't paid de rent, kick 'im out, kick 'im out, kick 'im out.[2]

In the song *Jonny Roach,* performed by the middle of March, Jonny, in his last two lines, admits that as a contraband he cannot get along very well in the North:

To Canada old John was bound
All by de railroad underground;
He's got no clothes—he's got no "tin"
He wishes he was back agin.

And he makes clear what "back agin" means:

Gib me de place called "Dixie's Land",
Wid hoe and shubble in my hand;
Whar fiddles ring an' banjos play,
I'll dance all night an' work all day.[3]

Here, to my knowledge, is the very first occurrence in print of the word "Dixie" as another name for the South—the black one, to be exact.

The political situation worsened rapidly. It was analyzed with great insight in an editorial of the New York Herald of March 29 (1859), which ended on this ominous and prophetic note:

When we find the African slave traders in the South securely protected by public opinion against the federal authorities, and Southern public meetings deliberately resolving that "all laws of the federal government interdicting the right of the Southern people to bring and import slaves from Africa are unconstitutional, null and void", there is every reason to fear that there is mischief in this thing, which, in 1860, will shake the Union to its foundation.

A few days later, on April 4, the song *Dixie* appeared on the stage of the Bryants. Coming at the height of public concern over the Negro issue, its text and tune sharply focused the main cause of the political turmoil while affording relief in laughter from its tensions. The Negro protagonist of the song states with much greater emphasis than in any of the aforementioned songs that the South is the only

[2] From an early text version of the song, *ibid.* It was published in sheet-music form in New York in 1860.

[3] From *Bryant's Power of Music.*

place where he belongs, and where he feels happy. Instead of the South, he speaks of Dixie's Land. Inasmuch as he declares himself utterly contented with his social status, he is the embodiment of the day-dreams of many white Americans shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War.

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The date of the performance of *Dixie* or rather *Dixie's Land,* as it was first called, is usually given incorrectly. A copy of the playbill of the first night exists in the Harvard Theatre Collection (see the illustration opposite p. 64). It is a typical minstrel playbill of the late fifties. The show started out with sentimental "white" ballads and, as it proceeded, took on increasingly comic and "Negro" features. Unlike earlier "plantation songs and dances", *Dixie* did not, at first, conclude the show, possibly because the Bryants did not consider it effective enough. The original cast is not known but the main actors in a performance of *Dixie* a little more than half a year later were R. D. Sands, W. and T. Norton, J. Carrol, G. W. Charles, and Jerry and Dan Bryant, all of them not only comedians but skilled dancers.[4]

Dixie's Land was a "Plantation Song and Dance" or, to use the technical name, as indicated on the composer's manuscripts of this period, a "walk 'round". A walk 'round was a laughable but realistic portrayal of Southern Negro life, frequently with plantation background. The whole company, about a dozen performers, participated in it. The greater part of them were arranged in a semicircle at the back of the stage, clapping their hands and stamping their feet to the music, while some of them may have played their minstrel instruments (banjos, fiddles, bones, tambourines, etc.), joining in the final chorus and moving to the instrumental interlude and postlude.

The first part of the song was usually performed by a group of two or more comedians standing in the foreground of the stage. Each sang, alternately, a stanza of the song, interrupted by brief passages of the small group. It is reported that each member of this group would also "walk around the inside of the gathering [meaning the large semicircle] three or four times and then, stopping in the

[4] See *Bryant's Songs and Programmes* 1859-60, Vol. II, program No. 38 (Harvard College Library). The song was then announced as *Way Down Souf in Dixie,* a "Corn Shucking Dance".

center, begin to dance".[5] As soon as the instrumental postlude began, the group indulged in a boisterous dance characterized by grotesque and rowdy gestures. Since in manuscripts of walk 'rounds the "dance" has two endings, a temporary and a final one, it was played (and performed) not only once, as suggested by the sheet-music editions (which were intended for use in the home), but several times.

When Emmett was in his eighties, that is, about forty years after the first performance of *Dixie,* he made a number of picturesque but unreliable and even conflicting statements on how he came to write the song.[6] I shall consider only an earlier one made by him in 1872 in the New York Clipper, a trade paper of show people (see the appendix to this article). In it he merely said that *Dixie* was composed in New York "on one rainy Sunday in Elm Street, between Broome and Spring streets, No. 197, Room No. 1".

The style of the song, too, connects it closely with the production for the Bryants and with no songs of a previous period. Except for a single wholly uncorroborated statement by Emmett shortly before his death to the effect that *Dixie* had been composed years before he came to New York, there is no evidence whatsoever for the song's origin in Minnesota alleged by a persistent rumor.[7]

I have already touched on the structure of *Dixie.* Like many of Emmett's walk'rounds it consists of thirty-two measures—a number still sacrosanct in Tin Pan Alley. The song is divided into two equal sections, the first, in its original version (see the illustration opposite p. 78), showing an alternation of a soloist with a small group that interjects brief, pithy phrases, the second being performed by the entire company. The first part of walk'rounds was by no means of

[5] From W. J. Henderson, *Negro Minstrel Melodies,* New York, 1910.

[6] Late statements by Emmett reported in interviews: in *The Writer of "Dixie"* by Rev. L. W. Mulhane, *Donahoe's Magazine,* June 1900; in *"Dixie" and Its Author* by Robert Sheerin, *The Century Magazine,* October 1895; in *Does It Pay to Be Famous* by William D. Hall, *The Lamp,* New York, January 1905. Still more unreliable statements can be found in a clipping from *The Sun* (New York?; Harvard Theatre Collection) quoting from the diaries of the minstrel Charles T. White; in *Fifty Years in Theatrical Managements* by M. B. Leavitt, New York, 1912, etc. See also Emmett's statement attached to his late manuscript copy for Dewitt Miller.

[7] Hall, *op. cit.* According to a claim (advanced by Judge Dixon in a letter of April 1, 1937, to Judge Kenneth G. Brill, President of the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul), Dan Emmett composed *Dixie* at the home of his brother Lafayette during his stay in St. Paul during the winter of 1858-59. The story, based on hearsay, is without foundation; Emmett lived in New York at this particular time.

introductory character. It was, in its way, just as expressive as the Chorus. Added to *Dixie,* according to custom, was an instrumental section, a fiddle tune consisting of eight measures with a half-close in the middle.

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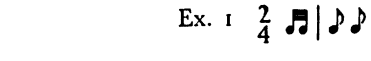
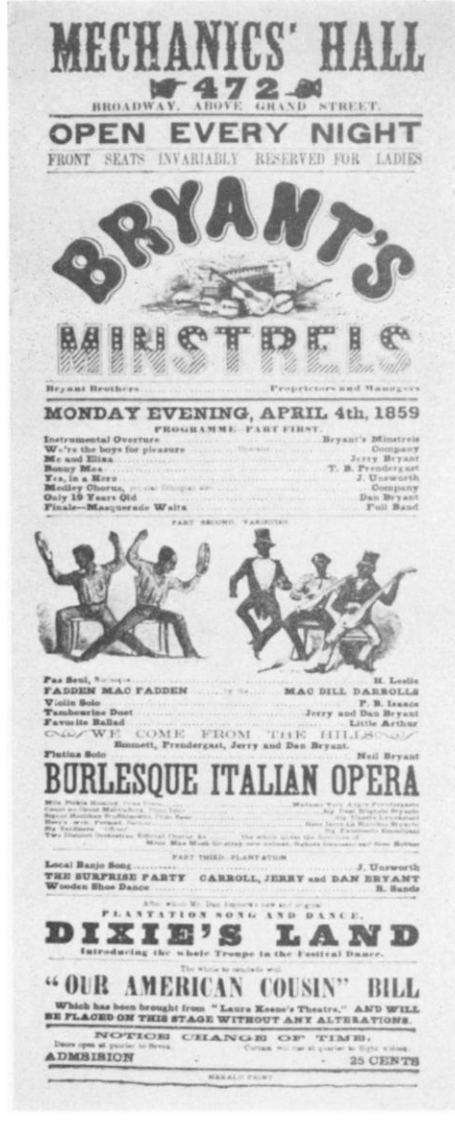
The longevity of *Dixie* is due chiefly to its qualities as a song, modest and unpretentious though it may be. The responses to the tune are unequivocal and, on the average, unchanging (if evoked by the piece played at its original tempo, which was considerably slower than the one now preferred by military bands). To me the tune seems to be characterized by a heavy, nonchalant, humorously awkward and limp strut and pace—elements still alive in such recent dances as the Big Apple. Taking tune and lyrics as an entity, I feel, in *Dixie,* grotesqueness mixed with lustiness and down-to-earth contentment, comparable to a blend of Brueghel and Mickey Mouse, which, I am aware, overstates the case. These specific qualities could have been developed nowhere but in the United States. And for this reason I do not hesitate to call *Dixie* the most American musical product of the 19th century.

As in every popular tune, we find in *Dixie* one initial rhythmic motif and its variants recurring constantly.

Ex. 1 

But this motif is integrated into long melodic phrases. Note, for example, how the first two measures of the song are naturally and compellingly developed up to the eighth measure (not counting here the two introductory measures; see the facsimile opposite p. 65). The entrances of the small group (singing "Look away") are always on the crest of the melodic line that has been set in motion by the soloist. Another notable feature is the effective way in which the second part (starting with "Den I wish I was in Dixie") emerges from the first. It takes up the anapaestic motif of the preceding section (for example, "Look away"), stabilizes it and spins it out into a new, more coherent melodic phrase. In other words, the final chorus or "refrain" carries out, as it should, what is suggested previously. Thus the two sections of the song are related but in a



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Yes, in a Hero ..... J. Unsworth
Medley Chorus, ... Company
Only 19 Years Old ..... Dan Bryant
Finale—Masquerade Waltz ..... Full Band

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FADDEN MAC FADDEN ..... MAC DILL DARROLLS
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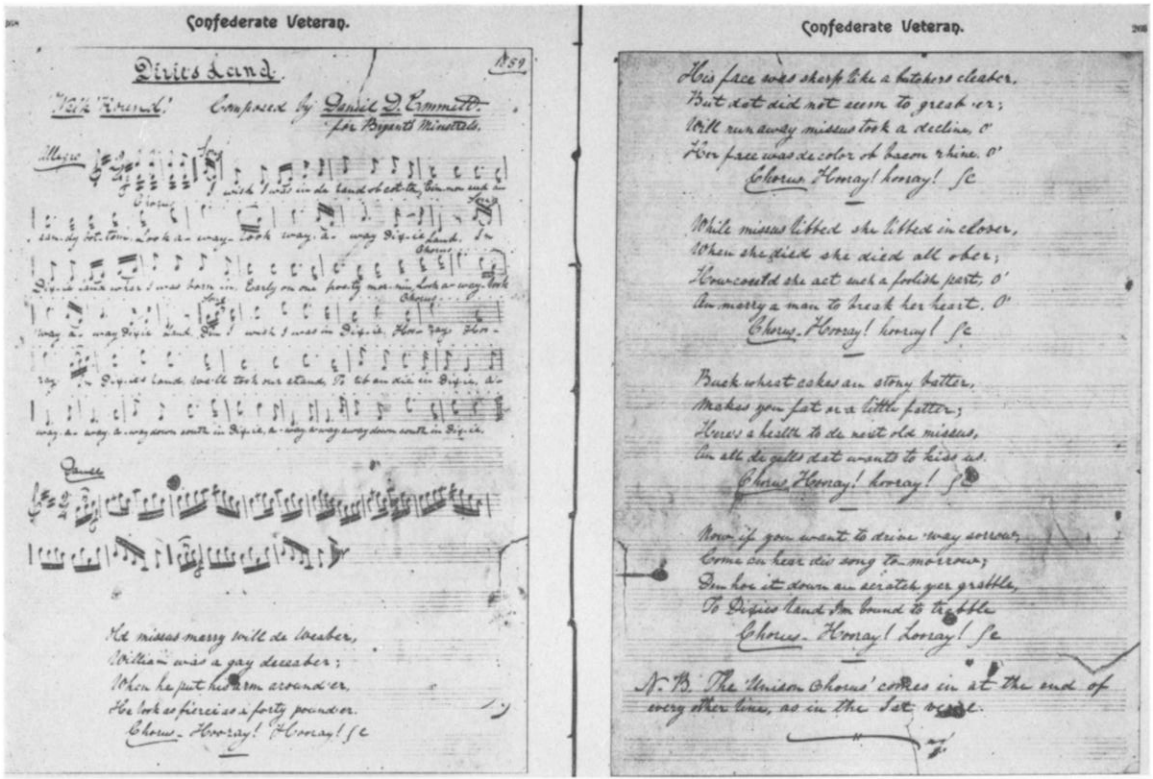
Playbill of the performance by Bryant's Minstrels at which *Dixie's Land* was first presented (New York, April 4, 1859)



Facsimile of a very early manuscript of *Dixie*
From the *Confederate Veteran*, September 1895

way that allows for ample differences. The melodic style of the song is of utmost simplicity; its line, describing over and over a triadic space, could hardly be of more outspoken major tonality than it is. Some of its intervals, unpliable as they are, seem to hang at an angle, but fit the style. *Dixie,* indeed, is no polite, genteel tune. It has a great measure of toughness, and like most tunes that stir the millions, it sounds familiar, but the tinge of triteness is made artistically palatable by structural features some of which I have mentioned. In addition, there is another quality that accounts for the popularity of the song: its melodic line, especially that of the second part, lends the text an inflection that approaches the naturalness of colloquial speech. No wonder, then, that text adaptations have not survived.

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It is generally believed that the original manuscript of *Dixie* is lost. All the manuscript copies now extant were made by Emmett in the nineties and later, when he lived as a pauper in Mount Vernon, Ohio.[8] However, there is a facsimile of the song which is worthy of closer analysis (reproduced opposite this page). It appeared in the September 1895 issue of the magazine *The Confederate Veteran,* published in Nashville, Tennessee. Along with it goes the facsimile of a letter written by Emmett and addressed to S. A. Cunningham, the editor of the magazine, who had visited him. It is dated July 31, 1895. Its last paragraph reads: "In compliment to you and the messages of good will you bring, I hand you to engrave for the Confederate Veterans the original copy of *Dixie,* made on that rainy Sunday in New York City in 1859." Emmett's description of the manuscript as the original may be untrustworthy. We can rely better on a compari-

[8] There are late autograph copies of *Dixie* in the possession of the Harvard Theatre Collection ("For Dr. Leroy M. Vernon, College of Fine Arts of Syracuse University with compliments of the Author Daniel D. Emmett, Mt. Vernon, O., July 4, 1893"); the National Symphony Orchestra Association, Washington, D. C.; Cornell University Library. Thomas F. Madigan, New York, a few years ago, had for sale a copy made by Emmett for "Dewitt Miller, Dec. 20th 1900" (a facsimile of the same manuscript and part of an attached autograph account of the origin of the song appeared in the catalogue of the American Art Association, Anderson Galleries, Dec. 5 and 6, 1934). There are other facsimiles in various magazine articles, in Charles Burleigh Galbreath's booklet *Daniel Decatur Emmett,* Columbus, Ohio, 1904, pp. 16 and 17, in Madigan's catalogue of June 1928, Godspeed's publication *The Lamp* (Boston) of February 1935, etc.

son with his manuscripts of the period when *Dixie* was composed.[8a] This comparison shows a practically complete agreement in handwriting, arrangement of the words, notes, text, title, and date on the page as well as the type of music paper used. Two more features that do not appear in the printed 1860 version of the song strengthen the impression that the manuscript of the facsimile is very early: First, the alternation between solo and chorus in the first part of the song; this alternation is very characteristic of all of Emmett's walk 'rounds, and it is most likely that it was part of the original performance of *Dixie's Land*. Second, the text of the facsimile agrees far more with that published in 1859 in *Bryant's Power of Music* than with that of the sheet-music edition of 1860.[9]

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Dixie was considered public property, and many comedians and writers adapted their own verses to it. I shall confine myself here to quoting those made by the composer himself. Assuming that the entire text version in *Bryant's Power of Music* is by Emmett himself, I give a sixth stanza, which, though related to a stanza of the original and the sheet-music edition, offers a few new word images. It runs:

Sugar in de gourd, an' stony batter
De whites grow fat, an' de niggars fatter,

In 1866 Emmett wrote on the back of a photo of himself the following stanza, calling it the first:

I wish I was in de lann ob cotton,
Ole time darr am not forgotten:
(Chorus)
In Dixie lann de darkies grow
If white foax only plant dar toe[10]

In the seventies or eighties, at a time when Emmett's career was over, he occupied himself with writing comic Negro hymns. Here is one that he wrote to the tune of *Dixie*:

8a In the Ohio State Library, Columbus, Ohio.

9 In addition, it is almost completely identical with the text of a manuscript that Galbreath (*op. cit.*, p. 18), who found it among Emmett's manuscripts in 1904, called "the earliest manuscript of the song known to exist" and that disappeared in later years.

10 In the possession of the Alderman Library of the University of Virginia.

1 I wish we was in Caanan's lann.
I wish we was dar eb'ry man;
Chorus. We'se a gwine (repeat)
We'se a gwine, sho'as y'e bawn.
De sister dey will kum dar too.
And wear der high-heel rocker shoe.
Chorus. We'se a gwine (3 times)
Sho'as y'e bawn

Chorus
I wish I was in Caanan,
Oaber dar—Oaber dar,
In Caanans lann de color'd man
Can lib an die in cloaber
Oaber dar—Oaber dar,
Oaber dar in de lann ob Caanan (repeat)

2 Dar brackberries grow on de briar bush,
Dey grow so tick y'e got to push;
Yoa eat an eat till yoa git yoa fill,
Yoa belly soun's like a powder mill.
Chorus . . .

3 Dar de preacher man he aint no good,
He hab to go to splittin wood;
He loss de tex an he got no nickel,
To sabe he soul he's put in pickle.
Chorus . . .

4 De cawn stocks grow till y'e got to hoal 'em
If dey don't stop den you got to scoal 'em;
Den harness de mule an dribe 'im steady,
Whoop-jamboree, we all am ready.
Chorus . . .

In an undated text version which might easily be twenty years later than the previous one, Emmett wrote a partly new second stanza and entirely new third and fourth stanzas.[11]

2 In Dixie Lann de darkies grow
If white foax only plant dar toe;
Dey wet de groun wid bakker smoke
Den up de darkey's head will poke.
Chorus . . .

3 Dey hoe an rake an dig de lann
An plant de cotton seed by hann;
When massas gone dey down will sit
De young mokes dey git up an git!
Chorus . . .

4 You court de galls right on de squarr
An smoove de wool in dar curly harr,
Dey am not drunk—dey am not sober,
Dey try to faint but fall clarr ober!
Chorus . . .

In another late autograph, which was probably made around 1900, Emmett used many old stanzas but added a number of new lines:[12]

[11] The manuscript (without music) is in the possession of the Library of Congress. There are six stanzas altogether.

[12] Galbreath, *op. cit.*, pp. 16 and 17. Seven stanzas altogether.

1 Dis worl was made in jiss six days,
An finish'd up in various ways;
Look away etc.
Dey den made Dixie trim an nice,
But Adam call'd it "Paradise"

5 Ole missus die—she took a decline,
Her face was de color ob bacon rhine;
To kingdom kum den let her go.
For here on earth she stood no show.

4 I used to hoe and dig de lann,
But work dey say am contrabann;
Driber he come poken 'bout,
When massa sole me out-an-out.

6 De[n] hoe it down an scratch yoa grabble
To Dixie Lann I'm boun to trabble;
Whar de rake an hoe got double trigger
An white man jiss as good as niggar!

Emmett asserted in 1900 (his eighty-fifth year) that the above first stanza was the original first one, adding:[13] "My first verse as I composed it I never published, although I sang it every night." He had forty-odd years to tell the story. It is clear that he told it so late not because it was true but because it seemed to him attractive. This is one of the many bits of evidence that he remained a showman up to the end of his long life.

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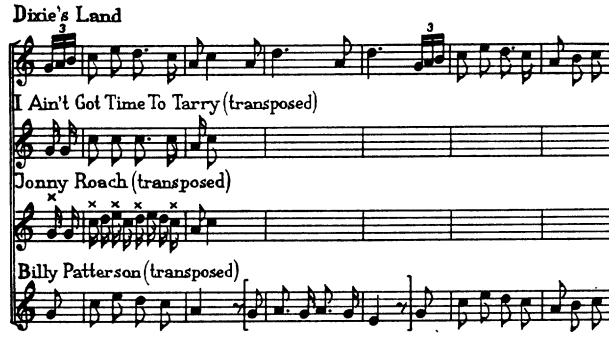
Dixie's melodic style is not unique among Emmett's songs composed for the Bryants. Traces of two of its patterns appear in songs shortly preceding it as well in those following it. Before *Dixie* was written, the pattern of a part of its chorus crops up, varied melodically, in *I Ain't Got Time To Tarry* and *Jonny Roach.*

Ex. 2



After its première, the same formula can be found in *Billy Patterson* (performed end of October, 1859), and, reduced to its rhythmic

[13] In the account on *Dixie,* attached to the Dewitt Miller autograph. The same first stanza appears in this autograph, too.

skeleton, in *Old K.Y. Ky.* (performed end of April, 1860). Even four years later, in *Black Brigade* (1863), the rhythmic pattern of the entire chorus of *Dixie,* not merely of its opening, is imitated. In the song *Sandy Gibson's* that immediately followed *Dixie,* Emmett used a variant of the melody that underlay "away, Look away! Look away! Dixie Land".

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Stylistic comparison alone, unaided by dates, clearly establishes Emmett as the composer of *Dixie.* Although his contemporaries should have seen this point, a number of them, nevertheless, made statements to the contrary. Let us examine some of their claims more closely.

The tune of *Dixie* was held identical with an old Southern Negro air.[14] This air was indeed known in the first half of the past century. Its text appeared in full in *The Comic Forget-Me-Not Songster* (Philadelphia, probably middle forties) and *The Popular National Songster* (Philadelphia, 1845). It started with:

> If I had a donkey wot wouldn't go
> D'ye think I'd wollop him—no, no, no,

This was the American version of Henry R. Bishop's song *The Dashing White Sergeant* (words by General Sir John Burgoyne), published in New York in the late twenties as sheet-music.[15] Its original text appeared in songsters up to the middle fifties, but the song soon acquired new words also, so that it circulated, in at least two versions, among white and black folks alike.[16]

[14] Statement of the song writer Will S. Hays in the Louisville Post, reprinted in The New York Clipper, Mar. 6, 1886. A similar statement was made by Hays' publisher D. P. Faulds of Louisville, Ky., in 1907; along with additional material it was republished in the Memphis Chamber of Commerce Journal of June 1924.

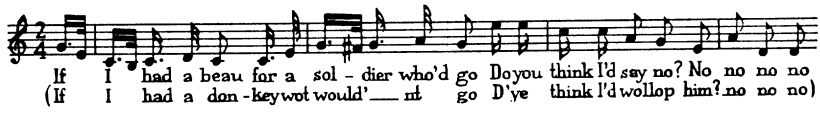
[15] Richard Northcott, *The Life of Sir Henry R. Bishop,* London, 1920. Bishop's song, inserted into an opera, was heard for the first time in Covent Garden, London, in 1812.

[16] The original text of *The Dashing White Sergeant* appears in *The Universal Songster,* New York, 1829; *The American Songster,* Baltimore, 1836; *Marsh's Selection or Singing For the Million,* New York, 1854, Vol. III. The tune is included in the *Second Part of the Musician's Companion* . . . compiled by Elias Howe, Boston, 1850.

Dixie, it is true, does show affinities to the first measures of the tune *If I had a donkey* [*beau*].

Ex. 3

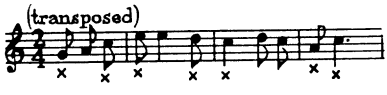
(transposed)



They are so slight, however, and, in the face of other possible stimulations that Emmett might have received, so irrelevant that he cannot possibly be accused of plagiarism.

According to another story, Emmett admitted in a conversation to have "based the first part of *Dixieland*" on the "song of his childhood days", *Come Philander let's be marchin, Every one for his true love searchin.*[17] However, the facts do not bear him out. It is also well to remember his naiveté and good-heartedness, which would have prompted him to admit almost anything if pressed hard. I am acquainted with two versions of *Come Philander.* The first has absolutely no connection with *Dixie.*[18] Parts of the second suggest merely the melodic outline (though not the rhythmic organization) of the opening of the chorus "I wish I was in Dixie".[19]

Ex. 4



Again, on the basis of these relations, Emmett's authorship of *Dixie* cannot be contested.[20] And when we proceed now to point out the

[17] T. C. De Leon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains of the Sixties,* New York, 1909.

[18] *Alamance Play Party Songs and Singing Games,* ed. by Fletcher Collins, Jr., Elon College, North Carolina, 1940.

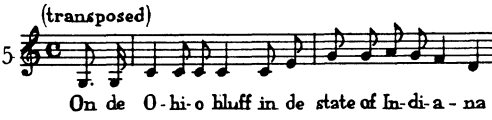
[19] *Folk Dances of Tennessee* by Lucien L. McDowell and Flora Lassiter McDowell, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1938.

[20] In the Baltimore Sun of July 11, 1904, only a few days after Emmett's death, someone mentioned the Arkansas comedian and song writer Harry Macarthy as the originator of *Dixie.* This claim, based on very flimsy arguments, was refuted in the same paper by Charles B. Galbreath. To clinch his point, he could have mentioned that the style of Macarthy's own songs (e.g. his *Bonnie Blue Flag,* a Confederate song) rules out any connection with *Dixie.* Both communications to the Baltimore Sun were reprinted in Galbreath, *op. cit.,* pp. 31 to 33. It was finally the abovementioned Will S. Hays who claimed to have written the words of *Dixie* "as a Confederate war ballad during the early part of the war" (and not in "1857 to 1858" as the publisher Faulds claimed for him). This is obviously false since *Dixie's* text was well known before the Civil War.

elements that did go into the making of *Dixie,* we cannot fail to recognize that they have been integrated into a song that the composer had every right to call his own.

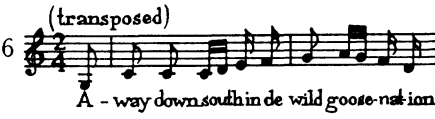
In 1844 Emmett published a song entitled *De Wild Goose-Nation.* Its tune was a variant of the minstrel song *Gumbo Chaff* of the thirties,[21] which in its turn may be traced back to English 18th-century sources. *Gumbo Chaff* opens thus:

Ex. 5



Emmett changed it, slightly, to:

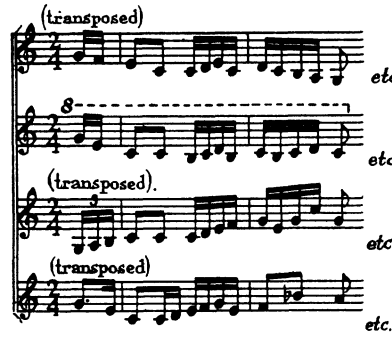
Ex. 6



The last example interests us particularly because rhythmically and, to some extent, melodically it anticipates the first measures of *Dixie.*

While *De Wild Goose-Nation* may have been one source of *Dixie,* there remains the possibility that Emmett merely varied the opening patterns of hornpipes and kindred tunes.[22]

Ex. 7



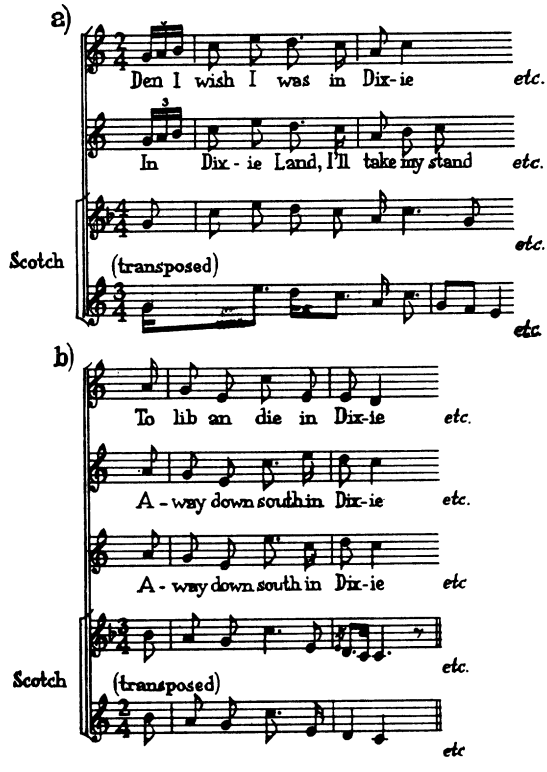
The second part of *Dixie* can probably be traced back to older material, since the section of *Billy Patterson* to which it is related is

[21] Baltimore, published by Willig, Jr., n.d.

[22] *Vinton's Hornpipe* from *Fife Instructor* by Daniel D. Emmett, N. Y., 1862; *Spirits of France* from *Second Part of the Musician's Companion . . .* compiled by Elias Howe, Boston, 1850; *Apollo Club-Hornpipe* from *Ryan's Mammoth Collection . . .,* published by Elias Howe, Boston, 1883; *The Maid of Sweet Gurteen* from *The Complete Collection of Irish Music* by George Petrie, London, 1902.

marked in the sheet-music edition "Old Melody". This melody, if it exists at all, I have not been able to find, but it is obvious that several passages in the second part of *Dixie* are variants of Scotch folk tunes.[23]

Ex. 8



The instrumental interludes (which were also postludes) of walk 'rounds were frequently well known fiddle tunes. As to *Dixie's* "dance", there is the testimony of a Mr. Oscar Coon, an old musician who knew the Bryants and, many years later, remembered that they "tacked on the jig *Beans of Albany* for the dance at the end [of *Dixie*]".[24] Since names in folk music are highly variable, it is not surprising to find the tune in Emmett's own *Fife Instructor* under

[23] The four fragments of Scotch tunes (*O, my love is like a red, red rose; O, Willie's fair and Willie's rare; O, Waly, Waly, up the bank; See afar yon hill Ardmore*) are from *The Minstrelsy of Scotland* by Alfred Moffat, London, 1894.

[24] *How Emmett Came to Write "Dixie"*, in *Musical America*, Sept. 9, 1911.

the title of *Albany Beef.*[25] It is of Irish-Scotch ancestry.[26] Emmett used its second part as the "dance" in *Dixie.*

In his *Fife Instructor* Emmett published a military version of *Dixie* and replaced the former "dance" with a new tune. To this he added the name of "Walch". The tune can be identified as part of the *Waterman Quickstep* by J. H. Walch, published in Boston in 1837.

The words of *Dixie,* like those of almost all of his songs, were by Emmett himself. But like all minstrels and other folk musicians, he relied on a stock of well known phrases and word pictures. I will enumerate here only a few striking ones in the earliest versions of the song. "I wish I was in . . ." appears as early as the thirties in the minstrel song *Clare de Kitchen* in the form "I wish I was back in old Kentuck" and remains popular, though referring to various localities, in the forties and fifties.[27] "Away down south in . . ." was firmly established in the minstrel songs of the fifties. Emmett himself had written as early as 1843 "Away down south in de Kentuck brake" in his song *I'm Gwine Ober De Mountain.*[28] The line "away down souf whar I was born" from the minstrel song *Picayune Butler* (Baltimore, 1847) is another early example, which also anticipates *Dixie's* "whar I was born in". The beginning of the second stanza of *Dixie* (see the facsimile of the first edition) was fashioned after "Den Missus she did marry Big Bill de weaver Soon she found out he was a gay deceiver" in *Gumbo Chaff,* a minstrel song of the thirties. And at the end of the fifth stanza, Emmett only rephrased lines of his own *De Wild Goose-Nation* which read "De tarapin he thot it was time for to trabble He screw aron his tail an begin to scratch grabble". However, the history of "To Dixie's land I'm bound to trabble" requires additional commentary. What is here called "Dixie's land" (for which an etymological explanation will be offered later) figures

[25] In *The Drummer's and Fifer's Guide* by George B. Bruce, New York, 1862, in recent years reprinted by Photopress Publishing Co., Chicago, n.d.

[26] See tune No. 74 in *Handbook of Irish Music* by Richard Henebry, London, 1928, and *Buckley's Fancy* in *Music of Ireland* by Francis O'Neill, Chicago, 1903. These two sources have been pointed out to me by Mr. Samuel P. Bayard of Pennsylvania State College.

[27] "I wish I was in ole Varginny" in *The Ethiopian Glee Book,* Boston, 1849. Other examples in *White's New Ethiopian Songbook,* Philadelphia, 1854.

[28] Other examples in *Christy's and White's Ethiopian Songster,* 1854. Stephen Foster's *Away Down South* appeared in 1848.

as "home" in the slightly earlier walk 'round by Emmett, *I Ain't Got Time To Tarry*. In this song, as was pointed out at the beginning of this paper, the Negro protagonist (as in *Dixie*) longs for a distant place, emphasizing "For I'se gwine home to Dinah . . ." and concluding "I'm bound to de land of freedom . . ." The key words, "going home", came originally from white and black camp-meeting hymns in which "home" meant "the promised land" or paradise.[29] From these hymns the phrase "I am going home" strayed into the comical context of the minstrel songs of the fifties, where it soon acquired a geographical meaning and eventually, in Emmett, a political one.

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For a long time people have been musing about the origin of the word "Dixie", which, ever since the Civil War, has been a part of American speech.

When the word was heard for the first time in New York in the spring of 1859, its meaning was clear from the literary and dramatic context in which it appeared. But people considered it novel and wondered about its derivation.[30] In 1861 two explanations were given out by New York publishers.[31] One reads as follows:

> In the popular mythology of New York City, Dixie was the negro's paradise on earth in times when slavery and the slave trade were flourishing institutions in that quarter. Dixie owned a tract of land on Manhattan Island and also a large number of slaves; and his slaves increasing faster than his land, an emigration ensued such as has taken place in Virginia and other states. Naturally, the negroes who left it for distant parts, looked to it as a place of unalloyed happiness, and it was the "Old Virginny" of the negroes of that day. Hence Dixie became synonymous with an ideal locality, combining ineffable happiness and every imaginable requisite of earthly beatitude.

This is a fantastic story, and there is absolutely nothing in New York folklore that would corroborate it. The second explanation of Dixie

[29] "Farewell, vain world, I'm going home" and "I'm on my journey home to the new Jerusalem. So fare you well, I am going home". Both passages are from *The Sacred Harp,* Georgia, 1844, and are reprinted in *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands* by George Pullen Jackson, Chapel Hill, 1933, pp. 221 and 224. There are more examples in the same volume as well as in Jackson's *White and Negro Spirituals,* New York, 1943.

[30] Emmett's *I'm Going Home to Dixie,* New York, 1861. Remark on the inside: ". . . many inquiries have been made in regard to its meaning and location . . ."

[31] One in *Bryant's Songs from Dixie's Land,* New York; the other in *I'm Going Home to Dixie.*

briefly elaborates in prose what the song itself says in rhyme, namely that ". . . . with the southern negroes, Dixie's Land is but another name for Home. Hence it is but fair to conclude that all south of Mason's and Dixon's Line is the true 'Dixies Land'." It is of course true that by 1861 the Negroes, like everybody else, used the expression "Dixie's Land", but the question is whether they did earlier. And for this there is no evidence.

One would expect the English correspondent William Howard Russell, when visiting the South in June 1861, to have found the definitive local meaning of "Dixie's Land".[32] Instead he heard essentially the same explanations as quoted above. He reported:

> There are two explanations of the word Dixie—one is that it is the general term for the Slave-States, which are, of course, South of Mason and Dixon's Line; another that a planter named Dixie died long ago, to the intense grief of his animated property. Whether they were ill-treated after he died, and thus had reason to regret his loss; or that they had merely a longing in the abstract after Heaven, no fact known to me can determine; but certain it is that they long much after Dixie, in the land to which his spirit was supposed by them to have departed, and console themselves in their sorrow by clamorous wishes to follow their master . . .

Another interpretation of Dixie, given sanction by Webster's Dictionary, associates the term with banknotes. Before the Civil War there existed in Louisiana ten-dollar bills with the French imprint "Dix", which supposedly were nicknamed "Dixies" by the "ignorant Americans living along the upper Mississippi River".[33] After some time, so the story goes, the name was extended to Louisiana and later to the entire South. Again, all this is mere fiction. "Dix" notes did exist, even as early as the thirties, but there is to my knowledge nothing in Louisiana folklore that would prove that they were called Dixies and that this term then came into general use. Moreover, "all other denominations likewise had the French names, and it is probable that most people . . . saw a $10 note only on rare occasions".[34]

[32] *My Diary, North and South,* Boston, 1863, Ch. XXXVIII.

[33] Quoted from an undated article of The London Financial Times in the circular *The History of Dixie* issued by the Citizen's Bank & Trust Co. of Louisiana, New Orleans, *c.* 1915.

[34] This quotation is taken from an informative letter sent to me by Professor Lewis M. Reagan of the University of Wichita, Kansas, who is also General Secretary of the American Numismatic Society.

In previous quotations we have found references to Mason and Dixon's Line as a possible source for Dixie. Another more explicit one is a Philadelphia sheet-music edition of 1860 of Emmett's song bearing the following title on its cover: "The Original Dixon's Line or Dixey Land with original words, arranged for the piano by Edgar Porter." The implied derivation, I am assured, is etymologically unsound though not impossible. However, like other explanations it presupposes the general use of the word in the South long before the Civil War. For this not the slightest evidence has been found.

Concerning another, less well known theory, I wish to call attention to a passage from The New York Weekly of December 30, 1872 (p. 6), which reads: "[Dixie's Land's] origin has been described as southern, but such is not the case. During any time within the last eighty years the term 'Dixie's Land' has been in use with the New York boys while engaged in the game of 'tag'."[35] The statement about the time element has yet to be proved. However, the phrase Dixie's Land does appear in the early New York children's game "Tom Tiddler's Ground", and it is reported that the phrase "antedates the war".[36] In another version of this game we find a literal quotation from the chorus of Emmett's song. From these facts, one could not possibly conclude that the expression "Dixie's Land" was known to New York children before Emmett had popularized it.

It seems to be significant that the name turns up for the very first time, to my knowledge, on the Northern minstrel stage in 1850 in a play titled *United States Mail and Dixie in Difficulties.*[37] The only character who was a real stage Negro in speech and action, regardless of whether the other actors had blackened up or not, was the "postboy" named "Dixie". He was stupid, anxious for tips and silver spoons, and crazy about music. In other words, he was a character that a prejudiced white audience of this time considered most real-

[35] Quoted by Joseph Jones in *American Speech,* October 1945, p. 238.

[36] Games Nos. 156 and 157 in *Games and Songs of American Children* by William Wells Newell, New York, 1883.

[37] It appears on a playbill of the Sabine Minstrels of Portsmouth [N.H.?], in the possession of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass. The playbill is mutilated but the following characters can be made out: Doctor Highrirsellbackemspokem; Dixie (postboy); Lucy[?]. There is no printed copy of the play extant except what is undoubtedly another version, published in New York in 1856 by Ch. White, under the name of *United States Mail.* The postboy has now become "postoffice Sam, a negro letter carrier" while the cast is completed by Mr. Wagner, Mrs. Nipper, and Lucy.

istic and most typical. His existence suggests the hypothesis that Dixie was an occasional nickname used by showmen to designate the Negro. Hence, "Dixie's Land", as used by Emmett nine years later (again on the minstrel stage), would mean "The Land of Dixie" or "The Land of the Negro". According to my knowledge, no Southern or Northern slave had Dixie as a first name. It must have been an invention of the white man, with its two-syllable rhythm and its final "ie" being related to the earlier stage Negro types "Pompey" and "Cuffee".

The above playbill is not the only evidence that the word Dixie existed before 1859 in theatrical jargon. Although Emmett in his statement of 1872 (see the Appendix) has no valid explanation of the word itself to offer, he assures us that "I wish I was in Dixie's Land" was an old saying often resorted to by Northern showmen when referring to the South.[38] Assuming, then, that the term "Dixie" was known to Negro minstrels and circus performers in the fifties, we should remember that it was finally Emmett who circulated it widely and persuaded Americans to include it in their vocabulary.

* *
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Emmett was devoid of any business instinct. Instead of publishing and immediately copyrighting *Dixie,* which was on everybody's lips, he waited more than a year before giving it to Firth, Pond & Co. They deposited it with the District Court of the U.S. for the Southern District of New York on June 21, 1860. Other publishers, considering the tune public property, were hard at their heels. For example, on June 26 John Church Jr. in Cincinnati "filed" a piano arrangement of *Dixie,*[39] but, in a later edition, acknowledged, doubtless under pressure, the permission of the original publishers. A number of other editions of the song or of variants of it apparently got away with mentioning neither the composer nor its original publishers, and even with substituting other names for Emmett's.[40] However,

[38] Similar statements by Emmett are reported in *Dixie and Its Author* by Robert Sheerin and *Does It Pay to be Famous* by William D. Hall.

[39] "Get Out Of The Wilderness and Dixie's Land, two popular airs as played by Capt. A. Menter and his American Cornet Band." Inside: ". . . arr. for the piano by Paul Jones."

[40] For example, one edition, published in Philadelphia in 1860 by Sep. Winner, which read on the inside "Dixy's Land by John Cahr, arr. by Sep. Winner"; another edition, titled "Away Down In Dixie's Land as sung by Hooley & Campbell's Minstrels, Song and Chorus by 'Jerry Blossom', Music by 'Dixie, Jr.' ", D. P. Faulds & Co., Louisville, Ky., 1860.

P. P. Werlein, of New Orleans, became involved in difficulties with Firth, Pond & Co. This was undoubtedly due to the fact that he not only credited a J. C. Viereck as the composer of the tune and a J. Newcomb as the author of a text which differed but slightly from the original but preceded the New York firm with the publication of the song by a few months.[41] The conflict was brought out into the open at a public hearing in New York, which was either a suit or a convention of music dealers.[42] There Firth, Pond & Co. proved Emmett's authorship of *Dixie* and their own rights to the song. Werlein must have acknowledged them because in a new edition he mentioned the names of Emmett and the original publishers, and of Viereck merely as an arranger.[43] Werlein's own imprint appeared on the cover of the second Firth & Pond edition. That the conflict between the two publishers was resolved to Emmett's satisfaction as well is proved by his dedication to Werlein of his song *I'm Going Home to Dixie* in 1861.

On February 11, 1861, at a time when the outbreak of the Civil War was imminent, Firth, Pond & Co. paid Emmett $300 for relinquishing all his rights to the song.[44] This action may have been prompted by the desire of the publishers to have a clean slate, fearing complications in the sale of *Dixie* (because of its "traitorous sounding" chorus) and in the protection of their copyrights in the South.

Indeed, a little later, Werlein, in utterly bad faith, ignored his legal obligations. He published a war edition of *Dixie* in which

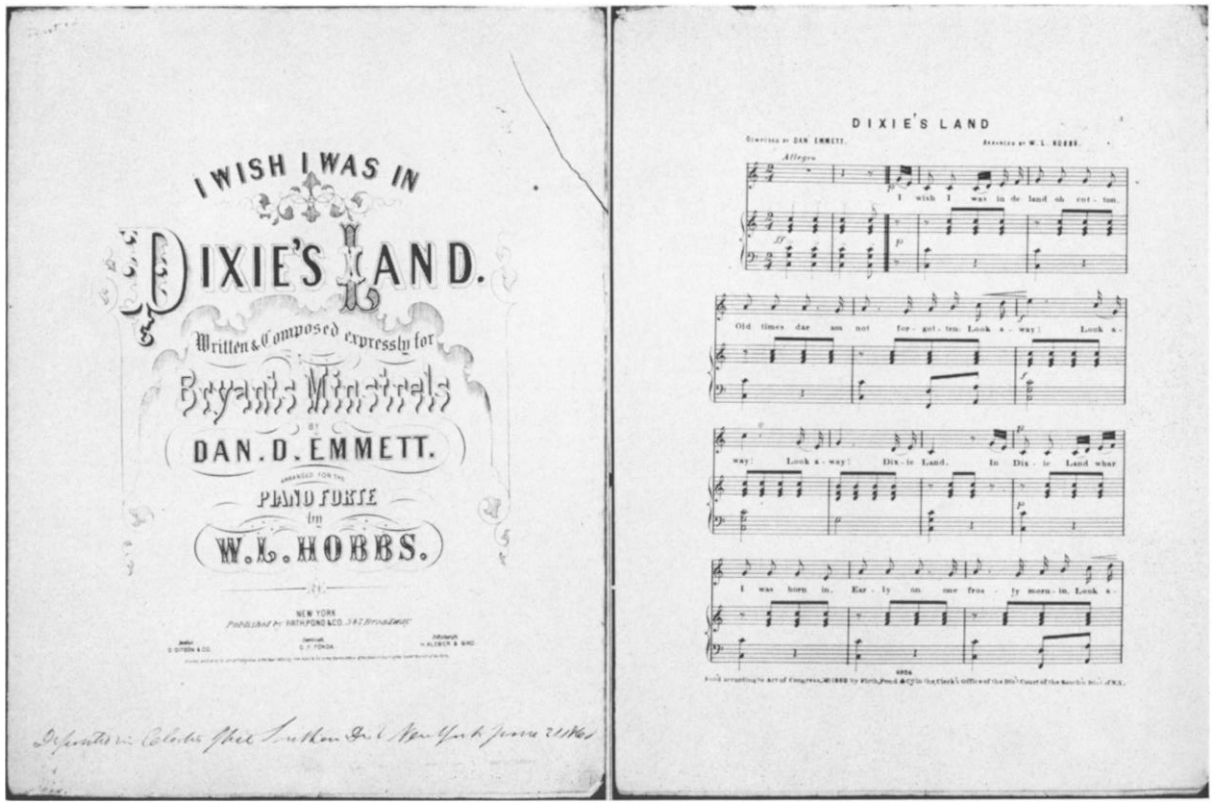
[41] Two editions, both of 1860: (1) "I Wish I Was In Dixie, words by J. Newcomb, music by J. C. Viereck, sung by Mrs. John Wood"; (2) "I Wish I Was In Dixie, song by W. H. Peters, music by J. C. Viereck."

Emmett stated in the New York Clipper of April 6, 1872 "I did not publish it until it was . . . issued by Mr. P. P. Werling [Werlein] of New Orleans . . . he wrote me a letter offering me $5 for the copyright." Indeed, The Daily Picayune, New Orleans, announced the receipt of "New Music" on May 5, 1860, listing the Viereck-Newcomb edition published by Werlein.

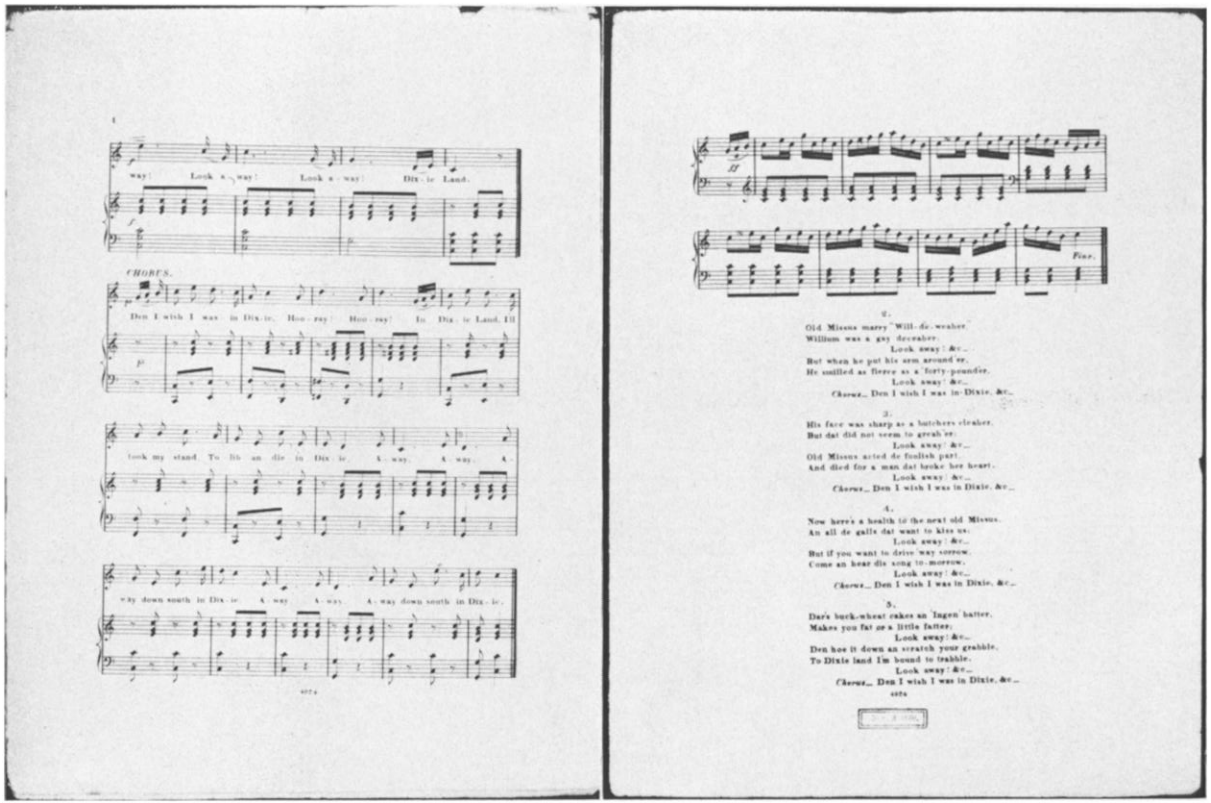
[42] Galbreath, *op. cit.*, p. 33, describes a convention of music dealers without giving his source. A clipping from Chicago, Jan. 24, 1880, in *Negro Minstrelsy in New York* coll. and arr. by Charles C. Moreau, Vol. II, New York, 1891 (Harvard Theatre Collection) implies a suit. Emmett in his statement of 1872 speaks of a public "dispute" that took place in New York.

[43] "Sung by Mrs. John Wood. I Wish I Was In Dixie's Land. Words by Mr. J. Newcomb, music by Daniel D. Emmett, words by W. H. Peters, music by Daniel D. Emmett. Arr. by J. C. Viereck, New Orleans, P. P. Werlein, New York, Firth Pond & Co., 1860."

[44] This contract is in the possession of the Library of Congress.



First edition of *I Wish I Was In Dixie's Land*


way! Look a-way! Look a-way! Dix-ie Land.

CHORUS.

Den I wish I was in Dix-ie, Hoo-ray! Hoo-ray! In Dix-ie Land, I'll

took my stand, To lib an die in Dix-ie, A-way, A-way, A-

way down south in Dix-ie, A-way, A-way, A-way down south in Dix-ie.

Fine.

2.

Old Missus marry "Will-de-weaber,"
Willium was a gay deceaber;
Look away! &c.
But when he put his arm around'er,
He smilled as fierce as a 'forty-pounder,
Look away! &c.
Chorus. Den I wish I was in Dixie, &c.

3.

His face was sharp as a butchers cleaber,
But dat did not seem to greah'er;
Look away! &c.
Old Missus acted de foolish part,
And died for a man dat broke her heart.
Look away! &c.
Chorus. Den I wish I was in Dixie, &c.

4.

Now here's a health to the next old Missus,
An all de galls dat want to kiss us;
Look away! &c.
But if you want to drive 'way sorrow,
Come an hear dis song to-morrow.
Look away! &c.
Chorus. Den I wish I was in Dixie, &c.

5.

Dar's buck-wheat cakes an 'Ingen' batter,
Makes you fat or a little fatter;
Look away! &c.
Den hoe it down an scratch your grabble,
To Dixie land I'm bound to trabble.
Look away! &c.
Chorus. Den I wish I was in Dixie, &c.

First edition of *I Wish I Was In Dixie's Land*

neither Emmett nor his publishers were referred to and Viereck again was named as the composer.[45] Other Southern publishers followed suit in disregarding the Northern copyright.

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Dixie became one of the greatest song successes of the 19th century. In America it rose to popularity almost immediately after its première and quickly spread to the South and West and to England.[46] Had Bryant's Minstrels been able to use and exploit *Dixie* all by themselves, it might have remained among the songs that become the vogue for a few months and then disappear forever. But other companies eagerly picked it up, as was their custom with Emmett's tunes, though without ever giving him credit on their playbills. We may believe the publishers' claim in 1861 that the sale of the song, then available only one year, had been "altogether unprecedented".[47] The New York Clipper, which had no financial interest in *Dixie,* called it, with some exaggeration, of course, "one of the most popular compositions ever produced" and added that it "has been sung, whistled, and played in every quarter of the globe".[48] It circulated not only in the original text version but in dozens of adaptations which appeared on broadsides, in newspapers and songsters. Moreover many editions, arrangements, and variations flooded the market from 1860 to 1863.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, the song retained its popularity in the North. Only by stages did it become a "Southern Air". As a matter of fact it was in 1861 that it reached the peak of its popularity in New York. A newspaperman wrote then: ". . . this lively tune has in our city [doubtless New York] become as popular

[45] "The War Song of Dixie. Words by Albert Pike. Music by J. C. Vierick[*sic*]". New Orleans, P. P. Werlein & Halsey, etc., 1861.

[46] General E. P. Alexander reports that in the early summer of 1860 "all the newsboys of New York were whistling" the tune. And a few weeks later he found it in Colon, San Francisco, and "Washington Territory". (T. C. De Leon, *op. cit.*)

At the end of 1860 Dixie was performed in London (see a playbill of Buckley's Serenaders in *Minstrel Memories,* by Harry Reynolds, London, 1928, p. 253). Soon it was sung by British sailors on the high seas; *Sea Songs and Shanties* collected by W. B. Whall, Glasgow, 1927, p. 14: "the chief favorite with the sailor, as a shanty, was 'Dixie' [in the sixties] . . . the wild savagery of the melody was stirring."

[47] Remark inside *I'm Going Home to Dixie.*

[48] Issue of Aug. 10, 1861.

as the most ravishing airs of any of the operatic compositions." And another one spoke in even more enthusiastic terms of the song:

> . . . "Dixie" has become an institution, an irrepressible institution in this section of the country. The itinerant musicians . . . have learned the fact and, by the insertion of a new barrel in their organs, have succeeded in producing the new melody in all its sweet shrillness. As a consequence, whenever "Dixie" is produced, the pen drops from the fingers of the plodding clerk, spectacles from the nose and the paper from the hands of the merchant, the needle from the nimble digits of the maid or matron, and all hands go hobbling, bobbling in time with the magical music of "Dixie". Won't somebody localize "Dixie", give it a habitation, a place where it may be hailed from? Set words of Union sentiment to its "ta la, ta la" and "rum di di di do" etc.[49]

The question was answered by Emmett's publisher, who issued *Dixie for the Union* with words by Frances T. Crosby. He also published another version of *Dixie* under the title of *Dixie Unionized,* with a new text dedicated to the "Washington Guards" which had been organized to defend the capital against the Confederate armies.[50] From then on many other war versions made their appearance. It should be noted that *Dixie* was played by bands of the Union Army at least until 1862; and as late as 1863 it was sung by Union soldiers, though not with the original words.[51]

It soon became evident that to Southerners the song was not merely a lively piece of music but practically a national anthem. This was perforce recognized by Northerners, for when they spoke of *Dixie* they carefully designated it as a Northern verison and treated the word "Dixie" as something debatable or something not their own. For example, a broadside was headed *The New Dixie, the True "Dixie" for Northern Singers,* another one was titled *The Union*

[49] The two quotations are from two clippings in the scrapbook of R. G. Shaw in the Harvard Theatre Collection. The first quotes the second, but they have been separated here. The second article, from the New York Commercial Advertiser, appeared in 1861 or slightly earlier because it was reprinted in "Dixie Unionized, words by A. W. Muzzy, melody by D. D. Emmett", New York, Firth, Pond & Co., 1861.

[50] Both songs have 1861 on their front cover, though *Dixie for the Union* has 1860 on the inside.

[51] *Dixie* does not appear in the Union Songsters *The Flag of Our Union,* New York, 1861, and *Camp Songs,* Boston, 1862, but it turns up, with new words, in *John Brown and the Union Right or Wrong Songster,* San Francisco, 1863. It is included in *Army Regulations for Drum, Fife, and Bugle* . . . by William Nevins, Chicago, 1861, and in *The Drummer's and Fifer's Guide* by George B. Bruce (including the *Fife Instructor* by D. D. Emmett), New York, 1862.

"Dixie", and a third read *Dixie No. 3 or "Dixie" War Song.*[52] The original meaning of the word Dixie (or Dixie's Land), suggesting the Negro's Never-Never-Land, as held out by the white man, appears for the last time in 1861 in Emmett's song *I'm Going Home To Dixie,* although doubt about the feasibility of this vision creeps up in the lines "I will proclaim it loud and long, I love old Dixie right or wrong".[53]

In the same year the Confederates established the word Dixie as a symbol of a South insisting on its traditions and independence.[54] Confederate soldiers occasionally sang the original words of the song but more often versions expressing war sentiment.[55] The original form of the chorus, however, containing the lines "In Dixie Land I'll took my stand, To lib an die in Dixie", meant so harmlessly by its author, was usually retained.

Time and again writers have tried to determine when *Dixie* was sung in the South for the first time and when it was used for the first time by the Confederate armies. These are fruitless attempts because the song was well known in the South from 1859 on, and war texts were adapted to it at exactly the same time they were in the North, that is, at the opening of hostilities. A kind of official sanction was given *Dixie* when it was played at the inauguration of President Jefferson Davis in Montgomery, Alabama, on February 18, 1861.[56]

It was not alone the words of the chorus that so inspired the Confederate soldiers. When the tune was performed like a military quickstep with hurried metallic accents, while its "angular" intervals

[52] The first is in Brown University Library; the second, printed by Peter Doyle in Philadelphia, is in the Newberry Library, and the third, printed by Horace Partridge, belongs to the American Antiquarian Society.

[53] This was a new text version of Emmett's *I Ain't Got Time to Tarry* of 1858.

[54] For instance in *The War Song of Dixie.*

[55] *The Dixie Land Songster,* Blackmar & Bro., Augusta, Ga., 1863, contains the original words as well as two war versions. *The New Confederate Flag Song Book, No. 1,* Mobile, 1864, includes only war versions, while the original text appears in *The Army Songster,* Richmond, Va., 1864.

[56] Bandmaster Herman Frank Arnold claimed to have made a band arrangement of *Dixie* and to have played it at the inauguration. His claim is quoted in T. C. De Leon, *op. cit.* The pamphlet *The Story of How "Dixie" Was Set to Music"* by L. E. Fisher (of the Asheville Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy) publishes a photo of this band arrangement. A memorial in honor of H. F. Arnold was unveiled in Fletcher, N. C., on Oct. 6, 1929.

sounded like bugle calls, it quickened their pulse, obscured their reasoning, and made them insensitive to the strain and pain of battle. *Dixie* became the battle hymn of the Confederate Armies. And still in our own time, when it is played in the South hats and rebel yells rise into the air.

The South has always been ashamed of the comedy style of the original text of the song but has never been able to eradicate this text from the memory of the people or to replace it with a more dignified one.[57]

Since Emmett's song had become a symbol of the Southern cause, it is usually assumed that the composer wished it to be so. This, like most opinions concerning *Dixie,* is the result of wishful thinking. It is true that old Dan Emmett, when interviewed in 1895 by the editor of the *Confederate Veteran,* voiced his gratification about "the friendship of the Southern people" and mentioned the Southern descent of his parents. But these were noncommital words which proved nothing about his attitude towards the Confederacy. The following story[58] is more significant. It is based on hearsay but has about it the ring of Emmett's own words. One day in 1861 Emmett and a number of other minstrels, Dan Bryant among them, were sitting in Tom Kingsland's on Broome Street in New York, "a famous bar and lunchroom" and hangout of the profession. A minstrel who had just returned from the front dropped in. He "told Emmett that, at night, he could hear the Confederate bands playing *Dixie;* and that they seemed to have adopted it down South, as their national air. Emmett replied warmly 'Yes: and if I had known to what use they were going to put my song, I will be damned if I'd have written it'." Like most minstrels he did not endorse Southern Separatism, nor, on the other hand, was he pro-Negro.

The political history of *Dixie* came to an end, to all intents and purposes, at the moment the Civil War was over. General Lee sur-

[57] In 1905 committees of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the United Confederate Veterans, and the United Sons of Confederate Veterans tried to start a movement that would finally select an official, new Southern version of *Dixie,* but were unsuccessful in the end. Generals John B. Gordon and Stephen D. Lee, when asked for their opinion, agreed on the necessity of "more appropriate words" but insisted that the original text of the final chorus be left intact. See the pamphlet *Joint Committee Appointed to Consider and Report on a Selection of New Words for "Dixie",* Opelika, Ala., 1905, which includes 22 text versions of the song. See also discussions on the same subject in *The Confederate Veteran,* Nashville, Tenn., 1903 and 1904.

[58] From a letter of Col. T. Allston Brown to T. C. De Leon, published in De Leon, *op. cit.*

rendered his army on April 9, 1865. With it, it seemed, he surrendered the song *Dixie,* or at least allowed the North to share in it again. This seems a trifle to us but not so to Lincoln, who had an extremely acute feeling for the worth of ideas and events of his own period. He acted accordingly. On the morning of April 10 he was serenaded. Appearing before the crowd that had assembled in front of the White House, he declared that he would not make a real speech. After a few preliminary sentences he, therefore, cut himself short by saying unexpectedly: "I propose now closing up by requesting you to play a certain piece of music or a tune. I thought 'Dixie' one of the best tunes I ever heard . . ." And with mock-seriousness he added: "I had heard that our adversaries over the way had attempted to appropriate it. I insisted yesterday that we had fairly captured it . . . I presented the question to the Attorney-General, and he gave his opinion that it is our lawful prize . . . I ask the Band to give us a good turn upon it."[59] It did, but that *Dixie* thus actually became a trophy of the North, the South has never admitted.

[59] Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln, The War Years,* New York, 1939, IV, 207 f.

APPENDIX

Statement of Dan Emmett on Dixie,

Written for the New York Clipper and Published in its Issue of April 6, 1872

"Away Down South in Dixie"

The Story of its Origin, as Told by its Author Dan. Emmett

There having appeared at various times during the widespread popularity of the song of "Dixie" different versions of the origin of the work, we requested its author Daniel D. Emmett, now and for several years past residing in Chicago, to give us his statement concerning it, and this he has done in the following communication:—

Chicago, March 13th, '72

Frank Queen. — Dear Sir. — Having received your request for me to forward to you for publication in the Clipper a correct statement of the origin of the song known as "Dixie", I will now endeavor to do so in as brief a manner as possible. I have seen several erroneous statements at different times since the close of the war, all of which are wide of the mark; and I never, until now have taken the trouble to contradict them. One principal reason for my silence was, that I had no further interest in the song, and that its popularity north was among the "things that were." To proceed then, it is necessary for me to state that I have been south of New York but once since 1851, and that was on a short trip to Washington with the Bryants' Minstrels some 6 years since, all other statements to the contrary notwithstanding. [However, in early November

1858, Emmett played with his own company, "Emmett's Varieties", in Selma, Alabama.]

In the spring of '58 [1859] I was playing in New York with the "Bryants"; my particular business was to compose new walkrounds for them as fast as required. Some time in the spring of that year (1858) [1859], amongst others, I composed the words and music of a song that I afterwards published by the title of "I wish I was in Dixie's Land," which was afterwards, by universal custom, called "Dixie". It was composed on one rainy Sunday in Elm Street, between Broome and Spring Streets, No. 197, Room No. 1. Previous to that time neither I nor any other person had ever heard anything like it, although "Dixie's Land" is an old phrase applied to the Southern States, at least to that part of it lying south of Mason and Dixon's Line. [The implied derivation is based on legend rather than fact.] In my traveling days amongst showmen, when we would start for a winter's season south, while speaking of the change, they would invariably ejactulate [*sic*] the stereotyped saying:—"I Wish I Was in Dixie's Land," meaning the southern country; though others have attempted, in vain, to locate it on Staten Island. The song of "Dixie" was never heard south until it was taken there first by the "Buckleys" and the "Newcombs," each of whom purchased a copy of me while they were in New York. [This purchase does not prove that it was these companies that introduced Dixie to the South. To judge at least by a number of northern playbills, minstrel companies simply picked up the song by ear as soon as it appeared and performed it.] It took amazingly south as some-thing new! Show people generally, if not always, have a chance to hear every local song as they pass through the different sections of the country, and particularly so with minstrel companies, who are always on the lookout for songs and sayings that will answer for their business; but none had ever heard anything like my song of "Dixie". I did not publish it until it had become common property and then not until it was issued by Mr. P. P. Werling [Werlein], of New Orleans. He published it in Mr. Peters' name, at the same time he wrote me a letter offering me five dollars for the copyright! (His letter is now in the possession of Mr. Wm. Pond, of New York, who published my copy.) Mr. Pond compelled all those who had published my words and music to disfigure their plates of Dixie and discontinue its further publication. Every showman and minstrel that was in New York at the time of the dispute about the authorship signed a paper to the effect that they had never heard anything like my song of "Dixie", either north, south, east or west, until they heard it sung at the Bryants' Minstrels in New York. And now to conclude this short, but correct statement, I will merely say that it is nothing but a plain, simple melody, with plantation words, the purport of which is that a negro in the north feels himself out of place and, thinking of his old home in the south, is made to exclaim, in the words of the song:—"I wish I was in Dixie's Land!" This is the first and only statement I ever made. With great respect, I am yours,

DANIEL DECATUR EMMETT